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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Reports submitted by States parties to the Covenant concerning rights covered by articles 13-15, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1988 (LX)

PANAMA

[27 July 1990]

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INTRODUCTION

1. In connection with the observance of articles 13, 14 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Panama, representing the national Government, hereby submits the report for the period 1984-1988 containing a description of the system and its development, together with programmes and activities by educational institutions. It also outlines the basic circumstances prevailing in Panama in relation to the rights referred to in the above-mentioned articles, circumstances which reflect the development of the situation, programmes and institutions.

2. The Republic of Panama last submitted information relating to observance of the Covenant in March 1985. That report was submitted through the appropriate channels to the United Nations, and so it has not been considered necessary to repeat that information; reference will be made only to those matters which were not mentioned in the previous report.

I. GENERAL

A. Panamanian education system

3. The Panamanian Constitution of 1972 states:

> "All persons have the right to education and the reponsibility to educate themselves. The State shall organize and direct the public national-education service and guarantee to heads of families the right to participate in the education of their children.
>
> ...
>
> "Education shall be democratic and based on principles of human solidarity and social justice."

4. In order to fulfil this constitutional mandate, the Panamanian State through the education sector, composed of a number of official organs, undertakes educational activities and acts in a co-ordinated manner. The Ministry of Education is responsible for directing the sector, which is made up of the following institutions:

(a) University of Panama;

(b) Technological University and other private universities;

(c) Institute for the Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU);

(d) Panamanian Special Training Institute (IPHE);

(e) National Cultural Institute (INAC);

(f) National Sports Institute (INDE).

5. Other government bodies also undertake educational programmes, which are co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education. These bodies are:

(a) Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare;

(b) Ministry of Health;

(c) Ministry of Agricultural Development;

(d) Ministry of Government and Justice.

6. Other State and private agencies, in addition to those already mentioned, participate in specific activities which help to strengthen, extend and improve educational services.

B. Structure of the education system

7. The education system comprises pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, adult education and literacy, private education, higher education, special education and supplementary education.

8. Pre-school education is available for children aged 4 and 5.

9. Primary education is free and compulsory; it is intended for children between the ages of 6 and 11.

10. Secondary education is divided into two cycles, each of three years' duration. The first cycle, which is general and exploratory in character, is intended for children between the ages of 12 and 14. The second cycle offers the following courses to pupils between the ages of 15 and 17: Bachillerato (sciences and arts), teacher training, and vocational and technical education. From the age of 18 onwards these courses are offered in State night-schools.

11. Higher education is provided by the universities and other higher institutions. The public universities are governed by laws which grant them autonomy.

12. Special education is provided by the State through the Special Training Institute (IPHE) for children with physical and mental problems.

13. Besides formal education, there are a number of non-formal education programmes offering a range of alternatives.

C. Current situation with regard to education

14. The year 1989 was characterized by a series of political changes which caused world-wide upheaval through a democratic breakthrough and led to the conclusion by the major Powers of nuclear disarmament agreements which created possibilities of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and winds of freedom between peoples. In Latin America, Panama, like other third world countries, has felt the effects of these changes.

15. Although the Panamanian education system has undoubtedly made progress in quantitative terms, it has not done so in terms of quality, since the education provided teaches a conception of life and the world which is not sufficiently in keeping with reality.

16. The prevailing adverse conditions constitute a challenge for the education system which the system will have to accept and thus offer young people an education that is more consistent with individual characteristics and meets the demands of a modern, free, democratic and prosperous society.

17. In this context, the education activities and policies which guided the establishment of the Ministry of Education's Action Plan will continue to be the same in 1990:

(a) Education geared to all-round training;

(b) Education in democracy and for democracy;

(c) Education for creativity, innovation and social change;

(d) Education for the assimilation of the high values of our cultural tradition.

D. Coverage of the education system

18. In 1988, a total of 656,189 students were enrolled, for all levels and courses, in the Panamanian education system. This represented an increase of 1,623 (0.2 per cent) over the previous year.

1. Pre-school education

19. In 1988, a total of 35,103 infants were enrolled in pre-school education. Of these, 26,967 (77 per cent) attended establishments in the public sector and 8,136 (23 per cent) establishments in the private sector.

20. There were a total of 853 establishments at this level, of which 642 were public, with 6,590 teachers, and 211 private, with 413 teachers.

21. The pupil/teacher ratio was 23:1 in the public sector and 20:1 in the private sector.

2. Primary education

22. In 1988, a total of 350,747 children were enrolled in primary schools.

23. Of these, 319,711 (91 per cent) were enrolled in public establishments and 31,036 (9 per cent) in private establishments.

24. In the same year, primary establishments numbered 2,675, of which 2,568 were public and 107 private.

25. At this level there were 14,073 teachers, of whom 13,038 were working in the public sector and 1,035 in the private sector. Pupil/teacher ratios were 25:1 and 30:1 respectively.

3. Secondary education

26. This level comprises academic secondary education and vocational and technical education.

27. Academic secondary education comprises the first cycles (academic) and the second cycles of the courses leading to the bachillerato in science, arts and teacher training (primary teachers).

28. Vocational and technical education comprises the first cycles (technical) and the second cycles of the courses in commerce, industry and agriculture. It also offers other training in subjects such as domestic science and various types of industrial skills.

29. The number of pupils enrolled in public secondary schools was 189,771, an increase of 2,935 (1.6 per cent). Pupils enrolled in private secondary schools in 1988 totalled 35,247.

30. In 1988, there were 10,151 secondary school teachers, including 8,202 in the public sector and 1,944 in the private sector.

31. There were 342 secondary schools, of which 215 were public and 127 private.

32. Pupil/teacher ratios were 19:1 and 18:1 in the public and private sectors respectively.

33. On the question of use of space, in other words, the number of pupils per classroom, there were 44 pupils per room in the public sector and 30 in the private sector.

4. Adult education

34. Through the Adult Education Department, the Ministry of Education offers courses to persons aged over 15 who, for any reason, have not had full educational opportunities. The courses offered include literacy, completion of primary studies, popular culture and special projects in indigenous areas, farmers' organizations, rehabilitation centres and public night-schools for secondary studies.

35. In 1988, 17,203 adults attended courses at 463 public education centres, staffed by 743 teachers.

5. Higher education

University higher education:

36. In 1988 the universities had 50,173 enrolled students, of whom 43,154 were in the public sector and 4,019 in the private sector.

Non-university higher education:

37. In 1988 non-university higher education courses were attended by 564 students, of whom 367 were in the private sector and 197 in the public sector. Teachers totalled 31 in the private sector and 43 in the public sector.

6. Special education

38. This type of education is intended to help and train children with physical or mental problems, through programmes which will enable them to recover and develop abilities they are lacking. There are also other labour and social integration programmes.

39. Special education is provided by the State through the Special Training Institute (IPHE).

40. In 1988, the IPHE had 5,940 enrolled students and 395 teachers.

7. Supplementary education

41. Supplementary education is intended to offer short-term vocational courses, among which we may mention: art, languages, nursing, beauty treatment, clothing industry, pastrymaking, tailoring and dressmaking, commerce and data processing.

42. In 1988, supplementary education courses were attended by 3,753 students, of whom 2,172 were taught by 120 teachers in the public sector and 1,581 by 76 teachers in the private sector.

8. Complementary services

43. There are a number of services which help to ensure that the process of teaching and learning takes place in the most effective manner possible. Among these complementary services we may mention: school buildings and maintenance, furnishings, and the school nutrition programme in surburban and rural areas.

II. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

44. To fulfil the constitutional provision which states: "Education is based on science, uses its methods, promotes its growth and dissemination and applies its results to ensure the development of the human being and the family and to strengthen the Panamanian nation as a cultural and political community", the Ministry of Education has conducted activities aimed at developing and strengthening the student population's national awareness, based on a knowledge of history, the country's interests and human solidarity.

45. The Constitution of the Republic states: "Education is democratic and based on principles of human and social solidarity".

46. The national Government, aware that education is one of the fundamental human rights, has provided educational services for all sectors. The budget has been increased to meet the demands of registration, classrooms, purchase of school supplies and equipment and appointment of teaching and administrative staff.

47. The Ministry of Education is responsible for meeting the educational needs of the student population from 6 to 17 years of age and people who were not able to enjoy the benefits of an education when young.

48. In order to promote the right of every person to an education, social science programmes are fostered at both the primary and secondary levels. Courses in good manners and etiquette offer the student basic principles developing the moral, intellectual and civic values and positive attitudes that will help him to behave as a worthy member of society.

49. The student is also given guidance on the importance of assimilating universal values on which to align his own behaviour and his attitude towards others and towards the social group to which he belongs.

50. Subjects such as this one contribute to the full development of the human personality, self-respect and observance and development of human rights.

51. Through the programmes in force in the State secondary schools, students are taught the importance of democracy in political and social life as the basis for respect for human dignity, to develop and strengthen democratic virtues. This programme helps to produce responsible citizens aware of their duties and rights by stimulating respect for the law and therefore for human dignity and political and social justice. This programme strengthens the effective participation of all persons in a free society.

52. The promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations is reflected in certain conventions, cultural programmes and bilateral agreements that have fostered good fellowship and exchanges. Some examples are the Andres Bello Agreement, the Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAL) and a Conference held at the Latin American Educational Communication Institute (ILCE).

53. The following are among the United Nations activities that have been promoted in our country:

(a) Anniversary of the United Nations;

(b) International Women's Day;

(c) Activities to raise awareness of environmental deterioration and conservation;

(d) World Food Day;

(e) International Literacy Day;

(f) World Population Day.

A. The right to primary education

54. The Ministry of Education, as part of its functions, provided schooling for a total of 566,463 students during the 1984 school year in all levels and courses. The 583,310 pupils registered in 1988 represent an increase of 16,847, or 2.2 per cent (see table 1).

55. An analysis of access to education by level and course indicates that, at the pre-school level, 26,481 students were enrolled in 1984 and 32,838 in 1988 in both the public and private sectors, representing 6,357 extra students in absolute figures.

56. Article 34 of Act No. 47 of 1946 stipulates that the goal of primary education shall be to provide the child with a suitable physical and social environment for all-round growth, one particularly conducive to the forming of good mental habits and behaviour.

57. Significant progress was made with Decree 110 of 4 July 1988, establishing the Office of Primary Education, which administers the education dispensed at that level.

58. Pre-school education is not a requirement for enrolling at the primary level, but it is the State's responsibility to promote its expansion and development.

59. The figure for pupils in primary school was 339,101 in 1984, rising to 345,202 pupils in 1988, or an increase of 6,101 (2 per cent).

60. Articles 39 and 45 of Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), stipulate that one of the State's essential duties is to ensure that education is democratic. The primary level is open to children between 6 and 11 years of age, with no distinction as to race, social position, political ideas, religion or of any other nature.

61. Articles 40 and 42 of Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act) stipulate that children from rural areas shall have access to education.

TABLE No. 1

SCHOOL ENROLMENT AND INCREASE, BY LEVEL SCHOOL YEARS 1984, 1986 and 1988

LEVEL	YEAR			INCREASE 1984-1988	
	1984	1986	1988	Number	%
TOTAL	566 463	575 052	583 310	16 847	2.2
State	501 060	506 220	51 ,490	15 430	5.0
Private	65 403	68 832	66 820	1 417	2.2
PRE-SCHOOL	26 481	29 481	32 838	6 357	2.4
State	18 646	21 695	25 089	6 443	3.4
Private	7 835	7 786	7 749	-86	-1.0
PRIMARY	339 101	343 616	345 202	6 101	2
State	314 859	316 585	318 226	3 367	1
Private	24 242	27 031	26 976	2 734	11
SECONDARY	181 774	187 312	190 166	8 392	4
State	148 468	153 322	158 090	9 622	6
Private	33 306	33 990	32 076	-1 230	4
ADULTS	19 107	14 643	15 104	-4 003	-21
State	19 087	14 618	15 085	-4 002	-21
Private	20	25	19	1	-5

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education.

TABLE No. 1-A

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND INCREASE, 1984-1988

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND BRANCH	1984		1988		Increase 1984-1988	
	Schools	Teachers	Schools	Teachers	Schools	Teachers
TOTAL	3 877	24 655	4 333	26 557	456	1 902
State	3 448	21 937	3 887	23 163	439	1 226
Private	429	2 718	446	3 394	17	676
PRE-SCHOOL	607	1 069	853	1 590	246	521
State	382	729	642	1,177	260	448
Private	225	340	211	413	14	73
PRIMARY	2 438	13 255 1/	2 675	14 073	237	818
State	2 348	12 485	2 568	13 038	220	553
Private	90	770	107	1 035	17	265
SECONDARY	321	9 491	342	10 151	21	660
State	208	7 885	215	8 207	7	322
Private	113	1 606	127	1 944	14	338
ADULTS	511	840	463	743	48	97
State	510	838	462	741	48	97
Private	1	2	1	2	-	-

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education.
1/ Refers to grade teachers only.

62. It is the duty of the State to open schools in rural and urban areas, every 2.3 km, provided there is a nucleus of 25 children or more.

63. Article 41 stipulates that primary education shall be compulsory and free. "Compulsory" means that education must be received by the children and dispensed by the State.

64. In 1984 there were 3,942 primary schools, 3,484 of which were State schools, staffed by 12,485 teachers, while 458 were staffed by 770 educators from the private sector.

65. In 1988 the number of primary schools rose to 4,400, of which 3,965 belonged to the public sector. Similarly, the number of teachers rose to 14,073, of which 13,038 were working in the public sector.

66. Primary schools have also developed programmes to strengthen and support access to education by low-income groups.

67. In co-ordination with other institutions, programmes were developed that focused on raising the nutritional and health levels of the most deprived pupils.

68. The School Lunch programme has benefited seven critical-poverty districts. Similarly, the Local Food programme has benefited 40,830 pupils at 1,001 primary schools in areas with serious socio-economic problems.

69. Additional services are available such as comprehensive health, dental and environmental.

70. The Book Bank has developed a policy of donating and exchanging texts and printed materials, at no additional cost, to benefit Panamanian children and support school libraries.

71. Guidance programmes have given attention to the social, economic, cultural and emotional problems and conflicts faced by Panamanian children.

72. Through the psycho-pedagogical clinics established under Decision No. 1587 of 15 September 1986, inter-disciplinary activities were conducted in primary and secondary schools.

73. Minority Asian and Hindu social groups receive their education through the private sector, provided they meet the requirements of the law.

74. The group of refugees from El Salvador in Panama have been granted the right to education.

75. Indigenous population sectors have received attention in the last decade. In 1984 the Juan D. Arosemena Teacher Training School graduated 49 indigenous teachers. In addition to regular teacher training, these teachers received training in the reading and writing of their mother tongues. This will help them to further the teaching-learning process.

1. Special education

76. The Panamanian Special Training Institute (IPHE) was established under Act 53 of 30 November 1951.

77. Special education is based on article 102 of the Constitution, which states:

> "Exceptional students of all kinds shall be provided with special education, based on scientific research and educational orientation."

78. The Special Training Institute caters for physically- or mentally-handicapped children. Since two years ago a private school for handicapped children has also been functioning in this Institute.

79. Regarding school registration, 5,385 students were enrolled in 1984, as against a total of 5,940 in 1988.

2. Primary level

80. In 1984 the primary level comprised 339,101 children, of which 314,859 were in the public sector and 24,242 in the private sector. There were 13,255 teachers, 12,485 in the public sector and 770 in the private sector.

81. In 1988, 350,747 children attended classes, 319,711 in the public sector and 32,036 in the private sector.

82. That year there were 14,073 teachers, 13,038 in the public and 1,035 in the private sector.

83. According to studies conducted in 1986 by the primary school Planning Office, the 6-11 age group comprised 293,743 students, which represents 92.5 per cent of the total population; therefore, 24,219 children, or 7.5 per cent of the population that year, were not covered.

84. The following are some of the problems hampering full absorption of the school-age population into the system:

(a) Population dispersion;

(b) Non-absorbed school population (10-14 years);

(c) Children entering the labour force at an early age;

(d) Schools lacking full facilities;

(e) Failures, drop-outs (poor and rural areas);

(f) Migration (owing to land tenure).

TABLE No. 2

ENROLMENT AND TEACHING STAFF IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS 1984-1988

	1984		1985		1986		1987		1988	
	Enrolment	Teaching	Enrolment	Teaching	Enrolment	Teaching	Enrolment	Teaching	Enrolment	Teaching
PRE-SCHOOL	7 835	340	7 466	327	7 786	334	8 038	345	7 749	365
PRIMARY	24 242	770	25 466	837	27 031	897	27 885	839	26 976	943
SECONDARY	33 306	1 606	33 317	1 704	33 990	1 841	34 608	1 999	32 076	1 995
VOCATIONAL	2 143	106	2 143	102	2 289	86	2 203	94	2 107	92

B. The right to secondary education

85. Chapter II, article 51 of Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), stipulates that secondary schools shall be responsible for continuing to stimulate the direct pupils' all-round growth begun at the primary level. It also stipulates that all public education shall be free of charge.

86. Act No. 13 of June 1987 eliminated enrolment fees in public secondary schools throughout the country, in both the first and second cycles.

C. The right to basic education

87. Article 93 of the 1972 Constitution, amended by the 1978 Reform and the Constitutional Act of 1983, established vocational education as a separate part of the educational system, with basic education and special training programmes.

88. According to the 1980 census, the number of illiterates aged 10 years and over was 174,123, or 13.2 per cent of the total population.

89. Adult education has been given priority in Ministry of Education plans to reach people aged 15 years and over who did not enter basic education.

TABLE No. 3

ADULT EDUCATION ENROLMENT BY TYPE, NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND CENTRES, 1984-1988

TYPE	YEARS		
	1984	1986	1988 1/
TOTAL	18 490	13 088	15 085
Literacy	4 314	2 950	2 778
Final level of primary studies	8 887	7 269	6 853
Popular culture	5 298	3 663	5 454
Teachers	838	592	657
Centres	510	438	-

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education.

1/ The Pueblo Nuevo vocational centre has 1,191 registered students, with 42 teachers.

The Escuela Demetrio Herrera Sevillano school has 16 registered pupils, with 2 teachers.

90. The following programmes have been used to combat illiteracy;

(a) Literacy classes for adults;

(b) Completion of primary studies;

(c) Popular culture;

(d) Special projects in indigenous areas, peasant organizations and rehabilitation centres.

91. The Literacy Programme is the first phase of adult education and is designed to reduce illiteracy in persons aged 15 and over. It also includes vocational training.

92. The teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic is emphasized.

93. In 1984 there were 4,314 registered students, as against 2,778 in 1988: a difference of 1,536.

1. Completion of primary studies

94. The course of greatest interest for adults is the post-literacy course, intended for people who did not finish school and have low work qualifications.

95. This programme also shows a decrease in attendance; in 1984 8,887 students were registered, as against 6,853 in 1988.

96. Both the preparatory course and the course leading to completion of primary studies appear to be less than wholly effective and, of little interest for participants.

2. Popular Culture

97. The Popular Culture Programme is designed to provide adults with training in specific trades or professions such as dressmaking, tailoring, cooking, beauty care, etc., in order to raise their cultural level and family income.

98. Vocational training is targeted at people left out by the educational system, to integrate them into the development of their community.

99. In 1984, this programme provided training for 5,298 trainees, a figure which rose slightly, to 5,454, in 1988.

100. Factors preventing full benefit from being derived from this programme include:

(a) Unsuitable programmes;

(b) Failure to meet expectations, both in rural and in urban, marginal urban and indigenous areas;

(c) The use of methods, techniques and content designed for children and totally unrelated to adult needs;

(d) The failure of current education policy to define adult interests, objectives and development goals.

101. The indigenous sectors are among the least privileged groups on account of their social, economic and cultural characteristics.

102. A total of 62.3 per cent of the indigenous population is illiterate; the majority of the illiterates are female.

103. According to the 1980 census there were 288,222 women in rural areas, 25.3 per cent of whom were illiterate, a slightly higher figure than that for men.

104. Some children between the ages of 10 and 14 take temporary jobs. According to the 1980 census the number of children concerned is 20,465; most of them receive no education.

D. Vocational and Technical Training

105. The Vocational and Technical Training Office was established by Decision No. 32-A of 15 June 1986, as a section of the National Education Office.

106. The tasks of the Vocational and Technical Training Office include the following:

(a) Ensuring that the aims of vocational and technical training are achieved;

(b) Implementing educational plans and programmes;

(c) Providing young people with a complete education so they can be absorbed into the labour force;

(d) Promoting training for teaching staff in technical subjects;

(e) Improving the technical skills of teaching, managerial and supervisory staff.

107. Areas in which technical training is provided:

1.	Agriculture	7 schools
2.	Commerce	23 schools
3.	Domestic education	2 schools
4.	Industry	13 schools

108. The curriculum for agricultural education was updated by Decree No. 26 of 22 February 1972.

109. A new curriculum was established by Decisions Nos. 821 and 822. It incorporates the recommendations made by the IDB consultants in phases I, II, and III regarding equipment and further training for technical teachers.

E. The right to higher education

110. There are two types of higher education in Panama: university and non-university. Three of the universities operating in Panama account for the bulk of university education: the University of Panama, the Technological University of Panama and the Santa María La Antigua University. All three have regional university centres and teaching extensions in various parts of the Republic. The following also operate in Panama: the Universidad del Istmo, Florida State University, Oklahoma University, the Inter-American Distance Teaching University and Nova University.

111. Non-university higher education is provided by public and private establishments; admission is conditional upon completion of secondary education. Post-secondary courses of this kind, lasting from two to three years, are offered by trade, tourism, seamanship, computer science, secretarial and special education institutes.

112. Another higher education establishment, sited on the campus of the University of Panama, is the Central American Institute for Educational Administration and Supervision (ICASE).

113. Figures for higher education as a whole show that in 1984 the number of students enrolled was 53,141, and had fallen by 1,519 (2.85 per cent) by 1988. Of the 51,622 students in 1988, 12,906 were men and 38,716 were women.

114. The number of women enrolled for university education, which accounts for virtually all enrolments at this level, remained proportionately higher than the number of men.

115. In 1988, 37,153 students were enrolled in the University of Panama, 12,732 of whom were men and 24,421, women. These figures include the regional centres and teaching extensions.

F. Development of a system of schools

116. The essential function of the National Education Co-ordinating Commission, established by Act No. 46 of 20 November 1979, is to organize the Panamanian education system.

117. The specific functions of the Commission are laid down in Decree No. 217, of 17 December 1979, which elaborates on Act No. 46.

118. Act No. 46 of 20 November 1979 was repealed by Decree-Law No. 6 of 9 October 1989, and the Co-ordinating Commission was re-established, with the same functions, by Decree-Law No. 34 of 10 February 1990.

1. Academic structure of the new Panamanian education system

119. The National Education Co-ordinating Commission submitted to the national Government a proposal for the overall academic structure of the Panamanian education system comprising two sub-systems: formal and non-formal. Both sub-systems lay emphasis on some general trends which are recognized to be important in any system: continuing education, for instance, which recognizes people's need for continued instruction and training throughout their lives.

(a) The formal sub-system

120. The formal sub-system resides in the academic structure extending from basic to higher education. The characteristic of this sub-system is that it provides a basic general training or vocational further training.

(i) Basic education

121. Eleven year's free and compulsory general education, comprising three stages: pre-primary, primary and pre-secondary.

(ii) Secondary education

122. Three year's free, non-compulsory secondary education.

(iii) Tertiary education

123. Higher education answering to Panamanians' abilities and vocational interests. It lasts a minimum of three years and may be extended to five, depending on the subject.

(b) The non-formal sub-system

124. This operates alongside the formal sub-system and caters for different levels of development in people outside the formal sub-system. It emphasizes an individual's involvement in the educational process to achieve personal, social, technical and vocational advancement.

2. Establishment of an adequate fellowship system

Institute for the Training and Development of Human Resources

125. The Institute for the Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU) is an institution within the education sector attached to the Ministry of Education.

126. Administratively, the Institute is made up of Executive Directorates, which are units with an essential role in planning, implementating and co-ordinating programmes and activities.

127. The Executive and Educational Support Directorate is responsible for implementing Institute policy on education loans and national and international fellowships. Its administrative structure encompasses the Loans, Fellowships, International Relations, Co-operation and Technical Assistance Departments.

(a) Legal foundations

128. The Institute for the Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU) was established to develop effective programmes to harness the Republic's human resources in order to speed up its social and economic development.

129. In order to succeed in this worthy task, IFARHU needs funds, which are provided by a variety of sources; the most prominent is Educational Insurance, established by Cabinet Decree No. 168 of 27 July 1971, amended by Act No. 11 of 14 October 1987. This requires 27 per cent of Educational Insurance revenues to be channelled to the Ministry of Education to meet the costs of the country's public schools and colleges. The remaining 73 per cent is allocated to IFARHU.

130. Act No. 11 of 14 October 1987 was amended by Act No. 13 of 28 July 1987, regulating the allocation of funds from Educational Insurance.

131. In addition, a number of regulations, agreements, accords, and international programmes enable IFARHU amply to achieve its basic tasks.

(b) Fellowship regulations

132. The programmes, benefits, requirements and procedure are laid down in Fellowship Regulations (see annex).

(c) List of agreements, accords and programmes

Agreements

- Additional protocol to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Panama and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), dated 14 April 1982;

- Cultural co-operation agreement between the Republic of Panama and the Republic of Bolivia, dated 8 March 1985 (see annex);

- Cultural co-operation agreement between the Republic of Panama and the Republic of Colombia, dated 11 September 1984;

- Fellowships agreement between the Institute for the Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU) and the Dedications Inc. Foundation, dated 18 June 1987.

Accords

- Educational and cultural co-operation accord between the Government of the Republic of Panama and the Government of Belize, dated 17 July 1984 (see annex).

Programmes

- Programe of cultural, educational and scientific co-operation between the Government of the Republic of Panama and the Government of the Polish People's Republic from 1987 to 1989.

(i) National fellowships awarded by IFARHU in Panama in 1988, by level and programme, and amounts disbursed

133. A total of 4,112 fellowships amounting to 1,082,377 balboas were awarded for primary education.

134. A total of 28,463 fellowships amounting to 3,292,052 balboas were awarded for secondary education.

135. A total of 7,410 fellowships amounting to 6,584,104 balboas fellowships were granted for university education.

(ii) Fellowships for university studies awarded by IFARHU in Panama, by annual amount disbursed, place of study and subject: 1984-1988

136. Some 5,750 fellowships, amounting to 2,382,845 balboas, were granted for study in Panama; 830 fellowships, worth a total of 1,818,414 balboas, were granted for study abroad. In each case the fellowships covered agriculture, biology, the exact sciences, medicine, law, the humanities, economics, social sciences, engineering, architecture and technology (see tables).

(iii) International fellowships processed by IFARHU under cultural and educational agreements 1984-1988, by discipline

137. Five hundred and twenty-one international fellowships were awarded in the following subjects: agriculture, biology, medicine, technology and social sciences (see table).

(iv) Loans

138. Three thousand loans, totalling 7,436,913 balboas, were granted for studies in Panama, and 2,233 loans, totalling 11,744,173 balboas, for studies abroad, in agriculture, biology, medicine, administration, the humanities, economics, social sciences, law, engineering, architecture and technology (see tables).

(v) Loans granted by IFARHU in Panama 1984-1988, by place and level of education

139. Six thousand loans were granted for studies in Panama, and 4,446 for studies abroad, at the university, technical and post-graduate levels (see table).

(vi) Special programmes

140. In 1984, in the special programmes category, the Learn, Work and Earn programme was launched with backing in the form of community and collective fellowships.

141. Activities in 1985 were as follows:

(a) Programmes for the benefit of young people;

(b) Promotion of self-managing enterprises;

(c) Follow-up for micro-enterprises;

(d) Technical assistance for micro-enterprises;

(e) Borrower recovery scheme;

(f) Promotion of the labour market.

142. At the international level, study programmes were co-ordinated by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

143. In 1986 the following special programmes were carried out:

(a) Help for 100 students at the Technological University: 11 study groups, 45 fellowship-holders and 42 loan recipients;

(b) Academic follow-up of 3,007 students studying in Panama and abroad.

(d) Improvement of material conditions of teaching staff

144. Although the Ministry of Education has been going through a crisis since 1979, owing to a variety of circumstances, it has set itself new objectives to overcome the crisis and direct its efforts towards the following ends:

(a) The democratization of education;

(b) Improved teaching;

(c) More attractive conditions for teaching staff.

145. To achieve these ends, the Ministry has set about producing laws, decrees and decisions to encourage and benefit teachers.

146. A summary of the main achievements of the Ministry's drive to give due recognition to Panamanian teachers' rights is given below:

(a) Introduction of group life insurance for teaching and administrative staff in the Ministry of Education;

(b) Adoption of a salary scale for primary- and secondary-school teachers;

(c) Promotions for 19,584 teachers;

(d) Payment of compensation to teachers working in inaccessible areas;

(e) Pensions for teachers based on length of service;

(f) Institution of a norm of 25 to 30 pupils per classroom;

(g) Appointment of teachers as the system requires;

(h) Option for teachers to join trade unions;

(i) Guaranteed teacher representation:

1. On Co-ordinating Commission for Education, which draws up Panama's education policy;

2. On the staff board;

3. In socio-cultural projects undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

(j) Option for teachers to request leave for studies, illness, pregnancy, etc.;

(k) Establishment of the Teachers' Loan Fund (COFREDUC);

(l) Implementation of Act No. 47, (Education Organization Act);

(m) Professional advancement opportunities for teachers:

1. In 1987, 5,156 teachers attended training seminars, courses and workshops;

2. A large number of leaves of absence and fellowships were granted for studies in Panama and abroad.

(n) Conferment of the Manuel José Hurtado Award as an incentive to teachers' efforts in the service of Panamanian education.

(e) Legal provisions authorizing improvements in material conditions of teaching staff

(i) Economic aspects

Act of 28 February 1973: Setting the salary scale for all teaching staff in Panama.

Decree No. 95 of 26 March 1965: Governing the compensation fund.

Act No. 4 of 25 January 1980: Establishing the Teachers' Loan Fund (a non-profit-making institution).

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), Chapter II, Article 30, page 13: Establishing the right to travelling expenses for head teachers, inspectors and school teachers whenever they have to travel for professional reasons.

Education Organization Act, Article 148, page 43: Establishing the right to holiday pay for workers in the education sector.

Education Organization Act, Article 157, page 46: Establishing the right to a salary increase for unforeseen separation.

Education Organization Act, Article 166, page 52: Establishing the right to continue to receive long-service salary increases when working as a head teacher or assistant head, inspector or replacement teacher.

Chapter III, Article 180, page 55: Education Staff: Establishing the right to teaching and salary increases for special school teachers.

Article 184, page 57: Establishing categories of salary entitlement for teachers with and without a university qualification.

Article 16, page 88: Establishing the right of school teachers at the Special Training Institute to receive a salary at least 25 per cent higher than that paid to official school teachers.

Article 153, page 44: Establishing the right to paid leave of up to 30 days; for illness, bereavement and other urgent matters affecting members of the teaching and administrative staff in the education sector.

(ii) Teachers' pensions

Act No. 85 of 9 October 1974: Covering pensions ordered by the State, remuneration as a supernumerary employee, and old age and invalidity pensions awarded by the Social Security Fund; relating to restrictions on working for third parties and other provisions.

Decree No. 1134 of 18 July 1945: Defining the status of supernumerary employees in the Ministry of Education.

Legislative Decree of 1 March 1946: Recognizing, and awarding a pension for, services to the nation by teaching staff with more than 28 years' service.

Decree No. 23 of 1946: Dealing with pensioners.

Act 5 of 25 January 1980: Recognizing years of service in private educational institutions by teaching staff not employed by the Ministry of Education, among other measures.

Decision No. 1365 of 9 August 1985: Approving the procedure for handling applications to be declared a supernumerary employee and awarded a pension for long service to the Ministry of Education.

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), Chapter II, pages 47-49: Primary school staff

Article 158: Establishing the right of teaching staff to be registered by category on the Teacher Grade Structure.

Article 160, page 50: Establishing the right of teaching staff to remain registered on the Teacher Grade Structure unless dismissed.

Legislative Decree No. 23 of 1 March 1946: Giving effect to the laws on retirement for head teachers of primary and secondary schools.

(iii) Professional ethnics and incentives for teaching staff

Decree No. 538 of 29 September 1951: Approving the Code of Professional Ethnics and creating incentives for the teaching body of the Republic.

Decree No. 421 of 27 November 1959: Informing teaching staff of the Manuel José Hurtado Award.

Article 168, page 52: Making it the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to encourage school teachers to remain where they are when, in the view of their supervisors, their work has been productive.

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act) article 127, page 37: Establishing that members of the teaching or administrative staff in the education sector will continue to be employed as long as they can be useful and are of good conduct.

(iv) Leave for teachers

Act No. 89 of 1 July 1941: On how to save leave while abroad.

Decree No. 681 of 20 June 1952: Further to articles 153 and 154 of the Education Organization Act, states that teaching and administrative staff of the Ministry of Education are entitled to 15 days' paid leave for illness, bereavement or serious illness of a family member within the second degree of consanguinity and the first of affinity.

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), article 154, page 45: Establishes the right to social security when a member of the education sector is off sick for more than 30 days.

Article 155, page 45: Establishes the right to maternity leave for female teaching staff 10 weeks before and 10 weeks after delivery.

(v) Teacher training

Decision No. 45 of 30 March 1989: Setting up the Office of Advanced Studies for teachers and clarifying its responsibilities.

Decree No. 48 of 8 November 1974: Establishing the Central Office for Educational and Professional Guidance within the Ministry of Education, and laying down its functions.

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), article 149, page 43: Making it incumbent upon the Ministry of Education to hold summer extension and advanced study courses for teaching staff.

Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), article 107, page 29, "Fellowships": Establishes fellowships and bursaries for professors, schoolteachers and members of the administrative staff.

Act No. 53 of 30 November 1951, appendix 4, article 15, page 87: The Executive will send such school teachers as the Special Training Institute may consider necessary to specialize in the teaching of deaf mutes, the blind and the mentally handicapped, in order to ensure that the Institute can function properly.

(vi) Grading, appointments, transfers, promotions; agreements benefiting teachers

Decree No. 184 of 24 June 1964: Adopting the regulations on the appointment of school teachers, professors, head teachers and deputy heads of primary and secondary schools and educational supervisors, and ordering moves to categorize teaching staff.

Decree No. 217 of 17 December 1979: Giving effect to the agreement signed with the teachers' associations to end the teaching staff action of 31 October 1980, covering:

- 16,654 awards of bonuses
- 1,244 long-service pensions
- 401 promotions of teaching staff
- 7,430 decisions granting leave for pregnancy, personal reasons, illness or study

Decision No. 161 of 1 February 1985: Establishing the procedure for grading teaching staff sitting the transfer and appointment competitions for the 1985 school year.

Decree No. 66 of 8 April 1986: Authorizing promotions between categories.

Act. No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), Title III, chapter I: Pre-Primary and Primary Education. Article 47, page 16: Establishing the maximum and minimum of pupils per teacher.

Act. No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act), article 48, page 16: Creating possibility for special school teachers to be appointed by assignment.

Title V: Teaching, Administrative and Training Staff, Chapter I, General Provisions: Article 1 amends article 113, which recognizes the teaching activities of school teachers and professors not on active service in official educational establishments.

Article 142, page: Establishing the right of any employee in the education sector to go to the courts if removed from his post without just cause.

Article 152, page 44: Establishing the right of school teachers and professors to have one year of service spent in preparing a book for teaching purposes recognized by the Ministry of Education.

Article 163, page 51: Establishing the right to appointments and promotions for teaching and administrative staff in the education sector.

Article 128, page 37: Establishing that no member of the teaching or administrative staff in the education sector can be either penalized or transferred for his political ideas.

Article 165, page 52: Establishing the right of any serving school teachers not to be removed from his post through the application of the Teacher Grade Structure.

Act No. 30 of January 1958, appendix 10, article 18: Governing adjustments.

G. Right to choice of school

147. Heads of households with children at school are organized into school associations. There are associations for primary schools, governed by statutes laid down in Decree No. 3 of 20 January 1989, and associations for secondary schools, governed by statutes laid down in Decree No. 245 of 16 July 1985.

148. The associations, in turn, establish federations for the two levels; such federations exist in all provinces. In the province of Panama there are federations for the district of Panama, the district of San Miguelito and the sector of Panama Oeste. At the primary level the federations come together under the National Confederation of Heads of Households, and at the secondary level, under the Civic Council.

149. Through these various organizations, heads of households are closely involved in the problems of the educational community and help to resolve them.

150. By Decision No. 369 of 15 March 1984, the Ministry of Education set up the Co-ordination and Advisory Office for Heads of Households, which is responsible for promoting and formalizing relations between the school institution and heads of households in order to encourage the latter to ask questions and become truly involved in the educational process.

H. Liberty to establish and direct educational institutions

151. Principal laws, administrative regulations and collective agreements designed to prevent interference with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, in accordance with article 13, paragraph 4, of the Covenant.

152. Chapter 5, articles 90, 94 and 97, of the Panamanian Constitution refers to private education in the following terms:

Article 90: The right to education is guaranteed, and the right to establish private centres of learning is recognized subject to law. The State may intervene in private teaching establishments to ensure that they serve national and social cultural objectives and provide intellectual, civic and physical instruction for their pupils.

Public education is that imparted by the official institutions, and private education is that imparted by private entities.

Teaching establishments, whether official or private, shall be open to all pupils without distinction as to race, social status, political ideas, religion or the nature of the union of their parents or guardians.

The law shall govern both public and private education.

Article 94: Private enterprises whose operations significantly alter the school population in a given area shall help to meet the educational needs of that area in accordance with official regulations. Urban firms shall have the same responsibility with respect to the areas in which they operate.

Article 97: The law may create economic incentives for public and private education and for the publication of Panamanian didactic works.

The Ministry of Education, in Decree Law No. 7 of 30 April 1954, article 1, states: "The Private Education Section of the Ministry of Education and the staff assigned thereto are hereby abolished, and an Office of Private Education, with staff, is hereby established as a subsidiary body of the same Ministry."

153. The Office of Private Education is a subsidiary body of the Ministry of Education.

154. The Ministry of Education provides economic support and appoints teachers for any schools catering for a student population with limited resources.

155. It also provides technical assistance to private schools generally, in the form of school supervision and the organization of lectures, seminars etc.

156. In determining the kind and amount of support required, the Ministry of Education takes account of criteria enabling support to be granted in accordance with the real needs of the institution. Those criteria include the educational services rendered by the institution; the wages of the teaching staff; the size of the institution; the amount paid by each student monthly; the completeness of the financial information produced by the institution; the number of students enrolled; the kind of periodical assistance received by the institution; its monthly expenditure, location and age.

157. Act No. 47 of 1946 (Education Organization Act) refers to private education in articles 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77 and 78.

Article 72: Private education curricula and teaching programmes shall require the approval of the Ministry of Education as a guarantee to the general public that they comply with social and national cultural objectives and with such specific objectives as may be set or announced, and shall therefore be subject to inspection and monitoring by the Ministry.

Article 73: All private teaching establishments, like public establishments, shall be subject to the authority of the Ministry of Education.

Article 74: When this Act takes effect, any private school or teaching institution which exists or may be established shall be required, in order to operate, to satisfy the Ministry of Education:

(a) that it has a physically, intellectually and morally suitable staff, as can be demonstrated to the Ministry of Education by means of the documents required of staff at official institutions of the same type and category;

(b) by submitting for the approval of the Ministry of Education its prospective organizational arrangements, curricula and teaching programmes;

(c) that it has premises appropriate to the educational purposes for which it is intended.

Article 75: The documentation referred to in the preceding article shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Education through the relevant Supervisor for its consideration and approval.

Article 76: Head teachers and teachers in private schools who fail to comply with the prescriptions of the Constitution and this Act shall incur a fine of 10 to 50 balboas on each count, without prejudice to the possible closure of the establishment in the event of recurrence or failure to pay the fine within the specified time. Such fines shall be imposed by the relevant provincial inspectors and enforced by municipal treasuries or converted into arrest by local councils.

Article 77: Education supervisors shall monitor private teaching establishments as regards:

(a) The physical, moral and intellectual state of their pupils;

(b) The trend of the teaching given, as regards the staff giving classes in history, geography and civics, whether they are Panamanian or not, and the development of the curriculum as regards history classes;

(c) Assistance for pupils in primary education and compliance with school health measures;

(d) All matters relating to the safeguarding of the interests of society.

Article 78: Private secondary schools may be incorporated or free.

Incorporated schools are those which adopt the curricula, courses, texts and regulations used in the corresponding official institutions.

When pupils at such schools sit examinations as prescribed by the Ministry of Education, the qualifications awarded and credits obtained shall be officially recognized.

1. Historical evaluation of private education

158. In accordance with the principle of freedom of education, Panama not only authorizes but encourages the development of private education.

159. The Constitution empowers the State to supervise private education in order to ensure that the aims of private educational establishments are not contrary to the interests of society.

160. Individuals who wish to open private schools must provide the competent authorities with proof that they meet the requirements.

161. The operating budget of the Ministry of Education makes provision for allocations to the private sector in the form of subsidies, worth 950,264 balboas in 1984, for teachers' and professors' wages.

162. In 1985, the private sector expanded with the establishment of 52 new schools: 41 pre-school institutions, 3 primary schools, 2 lower secondary and 6 upper secondary and short-term vocational schools.

163. Private middle schools have introduced computer science as a subject into their curriculums to enhance its technological content.

164. In 1986, the private sector provided schooling for 6,261 pre-school-age children in 78 establishments. The number of children enrolled in private primary schools was 26,454, in 109 establishments, while 33,968 pupils were enrolled in 75 private secondary establishments and 1,927 pupils were enrolled in 20 private institutes of further education.

165. In 1987, 75,890 pupils were enrolled in private education, broken down as follows: pre-school, 7,125; primary, 27,112; secondary, 34,558; higher non-university, 566 and further education, 1,927.

166. In 1989, 76,367 students were enrolled in private education, broken down as follows: pre-school education, 8,136; primary, 31,036; secondary, 35,247; higher non-university, 367 and further education, 1,581.

2. Types of private education

167. Private education comprises the following: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, higher non-university education and further education.

(a) Pre-school education: this sector fosters children's all-round development. It comprises two programmes, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, for children aged four and five respectively.

(b) Primary education: this is compulsory under the Constitution. The private sector takes in children aged from 6 to 11 without any distinction as to race, social status, etc. and is incorporated under the Ministry of Education.

(c) Secondary education: this sector comprises academic secondary education and vocational and technical training.

(d) Academic secondary education: this comprises the lower and upper cycles, and leads to a Bachillerato in scientific or arts subjects.

(e) Professional and technical training: covering trade, automobile engineering, electricity, etc.

(f) Higher non-university education: this is provided in the higher institutes of trade, tourism, computer science, secretarial skills, etc.

(g) Further education: this is designed to provide short-term vocational courses, including the following: artistic education, languages, training for nursing auxiliaries, beauty care, clothing industry, confectionery, tailoring and dress-making, trade and computer science.

3. Programmes developed and projects under way since 1984

168. The Office of Private Education is taking steps to improve the quality of education in order to overcome teaching problems within the educational system. These include: further trainin, for teachers, teaching resources and scholastic assessment.

(a) Further training for teachers: teachers from private schools attend professional training courses, seminars, etc.

(b) Teaching resources: teachers in private education are given guidance on the use of teaching resources in order to achieve the objectives of the curriculum and satisfy pupils' needs and interests.

169. Books are collected pursuant to the assigned task of the Book Bank to encourage reading at the various levels of education.

170. Teaching and administrative personnel in private establishments are visited by inspectors, who offer guidance in teaching, assess needs and provide technical advice.

171. The quality of the teaching is evaluated together with the efficiency of the system, the number of pupils who pass or fail and the drop-out rate.

172. Two measures are employed by the private education sector to analyse its shortcomings and adopt the necessary corrective steps: the Remedial Programme for Failed Students (PRER), and diagnostic tests.

III. RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN CULTURAL LIFE

173. The National Institute of Culture (INAC), which is the guardian of Panama's culture in general, was established by Act No. 63 of 6 June 1974 to direct, encourage, co-ordinate and manage cultural activities in Panama.

174. Panamanian culture is regulated by articles 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85 and 86 of the 1972 Constitution, as amended by the 1978 Reform Acts and the 1983 Constitutional Act.

Article 76: The State recognizes the right of every human being to participate in culture, and shall therefore foster the participation of all inhabitants of the Republic in the national culture.

Article 77: The national culture consists of the artistic, philosophical and scientific works produced by man in Panama throughout the ages. The State shall promote, develop and safeguard this cultural heritage.

Article 79: The State shall formulate national scientific policy so as to foster the development of science and technology.

Article 80: The State recognizes the individuality and universal value of artistic work. It shall sponsor and encourage Panamanian artists by making their works known through channels of cultural communication, and at the national level shall promote the development of art in all its forms through academic institutions and information and recreation centres.

Article 81: The historical heritage of the Nation consists of its archaeological sites and objects, historical documents and monuments, and other items that are witness to the Panamanian past. The State shall decree the expropriation of such items if they are owned by private individuals. The law shall regulate matters pertaining to their custody, which shall be based on their historical importance, and shall take measures necessary to adapt such custody to the requirements of commercial, tourism, industrial and technological programmes.

Article 83: The State recognizes that folklore traditions are an essential part of the national culture, and therefore shall promote their study, preservation and dissemination, establishing their primacy over expressions or tendencies that may adulterate them.

Article 84: The indigenous languages shall be the subject of special study, preservation and dissemination, and the State shall promote bilingual literacy programmes in the indigenous communities.

Article 85: The mass media are instruments of cultural and scientific information, education, recreation and dissemination. When they are used for publicity or advertising, such advertising may not be contrary to the health, morals, education and cultural formation of society or to the national conscience. The law shall regulate their operation.

Article 86: The State recognizes and respects the ethnic identity of national indigenous communities, and shall carry out programmes to develop the material, social and spiritual values of each of their cultures. It shall establish an institution for the study and preservation of these communities and their languages, and for the promotion of the comprehensive development of indigenous groups.

A. National Cultural Institute

B. Outlines of a cultural development policy in Panama

175. The increasingly rapid rate of change in the world and the diversity of factors and criteria that contribute to social conditioning have created expectations and altered the forms that knowledge can take. Hence the need to re-examine cultural objectives and harmonize criteria in order to achieve common long- and short-term aims, based on principles that have been clearly defined by the wishes of all Panamanians.

176. To this end, the National Cultural Institute, which is responsible for preserving and promoting the characteristics that distinguish Panama as a nation while simultaneously disseminating the highest values of universal creation and of spiritual, moral, social and civic life, needs to undertake a scientific re-examination of the responsibilities it must assume within the broad context of efforts to increase the worth of the individual in Panama.

177. This task requires an awareness of our characteristic features as a nation, of our historical past which casts us in our own specific role in the community of nations, of the plans for development and strengthening proposed by the Government and of international trends in the exercise of the democratic rights of peoples.

178. It must at the same time remain sufficiently broad to embrace both the spirit and letter of common aspirations, the search for common solutions to the cultural problems of our communities and an awareness of cultural diversity as the cornerstone of the respect that guarantees peaceful coexistence.

1. General objectives

179. The characteristics of Panamanian culture, which are, moreover, expressed in all aspects of spiritual and social behaviour, display a natural inclination towards democracy, and a broad awareness of the specificity of each component of the national community.

180. This concept leads to the following postulates that are suggested as fundamental objectives in the design of a policy for cultural strengthening and development:

(a) Democratic participation by individuals, groups and communities in the discovery, creation and enjoyment of the national and universal cultural heritage;

(b) Promotion of the values specific to Panamanian cultural and social identity as a means to national cohesion and distinctiveness;

(c) Development of the means of protecting and preserving our cultural heritage;

(d) Promotion of cultural activity in the artistic, scientific and philosophical spheres.

2. Specific objectives

181. These large undertakings require specific plans and programmes and a high degree of compatibility to permit simultaneous progress in cultural activities in all the spheres mentioned above. With this in mind, it is necessary to set goals consistent with Panama's actual situation and the resources available, while seeking autonomy in cultural management wherever possible i.e.:

1. Promoting participation by broad sectors of the population in the country's cultural life;

2. Training and preparing personnel specialized in the promotion and propagation of culture;

3. Developing services for the propagation of culture through the appropriate use of publications and the media;

4. Improving machinery for the propagation and protection of the cultural heritage;

5. Establishing programmes for the exchange of documentation, information, techniques and cultural experiences;

6. Co-ordinating programmes to rationalize the use of international technical and financial co-operation organizations;

7. Finding new sources of funding for culture;

8. Strengthening machinery for cultural programming and management.

3. Programmes

182. These general and specific objectives need to be implemented through programmes linking the various institutional and national sectors associated with culture, creating a broad network of activities involving all Panamanians equally.

183. The terms of reference and the scope of these programmes are, ultimately, the key features of a cultural policy capable, in the medium term, of stimulating broad articipation in culture by society at large.

184. The National Cultural Institute believes these programmes have to be encouraged in order to launch a plan to expand cultural services.

185. Simultaneously, community action by organizations responsible for the promotion of culture must be recognized as crucial to the expansion of cultural dissemination services. The multiplier effect of community action is apparent in the growing participation by communities in cultural development programmes and in their expectations of such programmes.

1. Promoting participation by broad sectors of the population in the country's cultural life.

1.1 Organizing and co-ordinating cultural centres in the various Districts of Panama.

1.2 Strengthening and expanding arts colleges in the different parts of the country.

1.3 Organizing travelling scientific and artistic exhibitions to enable the urban and rural population to benefit from the innovations of human creativity.

1.4 Co-ordinating participation by groups of artists representing Panama and foreign countries in regional, national and international festivals, in order to highlight the salient features of the dance, plastic arts, theatre and music of Panama's peoples.

1.5 Preparing and implementing international exchange programmes for intellectuals and artistic and folklore groups between the peoples of the world.

1.6 Fostering artistic expression and spiritual values by means of formal and informal education to promote the faculties of creative freedom and civic, moral and social values.

2. Training and preparing personnel specialized in the promotion and propagation of culture. A fundamental requirement if the objectives of cultural development are to be achieved is the availability of specialized personnel capable of motivating and involving the community in short-term measures to acquire such specialized personnel by organizing activities such as:

2.1 Pilot programmes to train cultural promoters in the short term.

2.2 Regional courses to train personnel in the promotion and propagation of culture.

2.3 Exchanges of teachers in different artistic, cultural and scientific disciplines with neighbouring countries.

2.4 Exchanges of teaching programmes and material on training in the promotion and propagation of culture.

2.5 Training personnel to teach the fine arts in order to etablish a teaching service offering broad coverage and optimum efficiency.

3. Developing services for the propagation of culture through the appropriate use of publications and the media.

3.1 Developing publications and short video and audio programmes that can be distributed regularly and easily through the various media - press, radio or television.

3.2 Producing anthologies, leaflets, and/or serialized supplements on relevant aspects of the artistic, scientific and philosophical heritage encompassing the creative output of the Panamanian people.

3.3 Developing the market for books by campaigns focused on the value of books as a source of knowledge.

3.4 Fomenting research in all areas by facilitating the publication of scientific works and reports to enrich the national bibliography.

3.5 Involving private publishing in an extensive campaign to disseminate and promote books as an accessible and essential commodity.

4. Improving machinery for the propagation and protection of the cultural heritage. Preserving and protecting the cultural heritage is central to the safeguarding of peoples' cultural identity. The threat that hangs over our collective cultural assets because of commercialization and illicit trafficking is forcing the agencies responsible for their safe-keeping and management to standardize their criteria for protecting them. They need to settle on such as matters as:

4.1 Tightening up national legislation on the supervision, protection and management of the cultural heritage.

4.2 Strengthening the bodies responsible for the supervision, cataloguing and restoration of cultural assets.

4.3 Ensuring strict compliance with international agreements on the prevention and protection of cultural assets.

4.4 Creating awareness among the population from the first years at school, by incorporating awareness and protection of the cultural and historic heritage into the earliest educational curricula and media programmes.

4.5 Producing a series of information leaflets designed to publicize and protect the cultural heritage.

4.6 Promoting and maintaining local community museums to publicize and safeguard different aspects of the cultural heritage.

4.7 Arranging meetings with specialists responsible for monitoring, cataloguing and restoring the cultural heritage of other countries.

5. Establishing programmes for the exchange of documentation, information, techniques and cultural experiences. Interdependence among peoples and cultures is an experience that gains strength as the mass media and information technology improve. A number of programmes run by international co-operation bodies, industrial enterprises and Governments which give priority to encouraging and developing exchanges of scientific, technical, philosophical and artistic information are working in this direction.

The National Cultural Institute must make a policy of promoting information exchange networks, in particular in the fields of history, handicrafts, folklore, literature and science by making use of the facilities offered by technology. Specifically, its activities should include:

5.1 Designing specific projects to harness material and human support by establishing such information networks in conjunction with the world's main documentation centres.

5.2 Strengthening the National Archive as the body responsible for the country's historical records by promoting speciaist computer technology transfer staff and teams.

5.3 Developing machinery for multilateral co-operation to facilitate exchanges of specialists in cultural research and development. Exchanges would be more effective if a data bank comprising the names and backgrounds of specialists in these fields were set up.

5.4 Holding periodic meetings of specialists to facilitate the pooling of techniques and experience applicable to specific aspects of cultural research and promotion.

5.5 Producing specialized documents on cultural research to provide up-to-date information on techniques and methods applicable under the conditions in the region.

5.6 Setting up a cultural catalogue system compatible with international models, to permit flexible information transfer.

6. Co-ordinating programmes to rationalize the use of international technical and financial co-operation organizations. One of the most important contributions to the promotion of culture and to safeguarding the cultural heritage comes from international organizations. In spite of the visible results, the fact is that such co-operation is not turned to maximum advantage because of poor information channelling and incorrect programming procedures.

6.1 Co-ordinating efforts to set priorities for technical and/or financial assistance to Panama in the field of cultural development.

6.2 Standardizing project programming and execution criteria with international agencies.

6.3 Exchanging information and experience of projects in the sub-region with international agencies.

6.4 Holding training courses on project programming, execution and evaluation with international agencies.

6.5 Holding meetings with experts from the region and from international agencies to standardize criteria and establish technical co-operation priorities and options.

7. Finding new sources of funding for culture. The ambitious endeavour of promoting and extending cultural services becomes daily more difficult, given the limited domestic financial support that countries allocate to it.

Solutions have to be sought at the international level and spending has to be rationalized in order to obtain optimum results with the funding available.

This trying situation calls for guidelines and measures to be drawn up to enable us to maintain the level of cultural services. Given this spirit of co-operation, operational solutions will have to be sought along the following lines:

7.1 Proposing to international technical co-operation agencies regional programmes for technical and financial assistance to promote culture and safeguard cultural assets.

7.2 Concluding bilateral agreements on mutual assistance in the cultural sphere with neighbouring countries as a means of cutting the cost of consultancies and exchanging material for the propagation of culture.

7.3 Involving private enterprise in cultural activities through joint sponsorship programmes.

7.4 Bringing communities into the task of cultural promotion by establishing cultural foundations, civic societies, etc.

7.5 Exchanging information and experience among the experts responsible for the financial management of cultural promotion in Latin America.

7.6 Encouraging the Government to make budgetary provision for activities to promote and safeguard culture.

7.7 Establishing machinery for co-operation in book publishing and printing, arts and crafts, records, videotapes, artistic presentations etc.

7.8 Promoting the works of culture through regional fairs, exhibitions and catalogues.

7.9 Setting up sales and distribution networks throughout the Americas and the world.

7.10 Drawing up standards and procedure for a suitable marketing system for cultural works.

8. Strengthening machinery for cultural programming and management. As in other areas of the public sector, cultural management requires appropriate techniques and methods to achieve its objectives. On account of the distinctive characteristics of culture, cultural management displays its own characteristics and a degree of flexibility to enable it to achieve an appropriate cultural mix. Steps such as the following will make it possible to strengthen the cultural programming and management machinery:

8.1 Holding discussions, meetings or congresses on cultural policy to permit democratic participation by people with different viewpoints on what the thrust and underlying premises of cultural activity should be.

8.2 Holding regional and sub-regional seminars and courses on technical aspects of cultural financing and management.

8.3 Exchanging experiences and printed material on cultural development plans in Latin American countries in order to enrich activities.

8.4 Encouraging administrative reviews and inquiries in order to streamline procedure in the institutions responsible for the promotion of culture.

8.5 Setting up technical units to plan the development of culture and artistic instruction.

8.6 Modifying administrative systems to suit the needs of and demand for cultural services.

186. All the proposals set out in this document derive from an assessment of ideas that have taken shape in various gatherings on cultural policy and from the preoccupations of artists, scientists, politicians and citizens who feel the need to set Panamanian culture on a steadier course towards participation by society.

187. On the basis of these criteria, we have suggested the above guidelines for a cultural policy in full awareness that culture is not just how a people perceives the world and expresses itself, but how it fits into history and society, and is an effective means of achieving a genuine democracy.

188. The National Cultural Institute comprise the following departments:

1. Policy-making level:

   1.1 Board of Governors.

2. Managerial level:

   2.1 General Management Division;

   2.2 General Management Sub-division.

3. External budget supervision:

   3.1 Treasury Inspectorate Audit Department.

4. Internal budget supervision:

   4.1 Internal Audit Department.

5. Support services:

   5.1 Administration Division;

      5.1.1 Budget Department;

      5.1.2 Accounts Department;

5.1.3 Treasury Department;

5.1.4 Social Work Department;

5.1.5 Staff, Supervision and Manning Department;

5.1.6 General Service Department;

Transport Unit;

Safety Unit;

Cleaning Unit;

5.1.7 Purchasing and Supplies Department;

Purchasing Unit;

Supplies Unit;

5.2 Division for Design, Research and Supervision of Works;

5.3 Legal Affairs Office;

5.4 International Technical Co-operation Office;

5.5 Cultural Research, Planning and Programming Office;

6. Operational level:

6.1 National Archives Division;

6.2 National Historical Heritage Division;

6.2.1 National Archaeology and Historical Monuments Commission;

6.2.2 INAC-OAS Centre;

6.2.3 Museum Department:

- Panamanian History Museum;
- Reina Torres de Araúz Anthropological Museum;
- Natural Science Museum
- Colonial Religious Art Museum;
- Afro-Caribbean Museum;
- Penonomé Regional Museum;
- Herrera Regional Museum;
- Manuel F. Zarate House (museum), Guararé;

- José De Obaldía Museum, David;
- Belisario Porras Mausoleum, Las Tablas;
- El Caño Archaeology Park;
- La Nacionalidad Museum, Los Santos;
- Religious Art Exhibition Room, Parita;
- Andina Gallery.

6.2.4 Department for the Supervision and Inventory of Cultural Assets;

6.2.5 Department for the Conservation and Restoration of the Cultural Heritage.

6.3 National Division of Artistic Education;

6.3.1 National School of Plastic Arts;

6.3.2 National School of Dance;

6.3.3 National Institute of Music;

6.3.4 National Theatre School;

6.3.5 Provincial schools:

- Chitré Arts and Crafts School;
- Chitré Fine Arts School;
- Colón Fine Arts School;
- David Fine Arts School;
- Veraguas Plastic Arts School;
- Estelina Tejeira School, Penonomé;
- San Miguelito Fine Arts School;
- La Chorrera Fine Arts School;
- Bocas del Toro Fine Arts School;

6.4 National Cultural Extension Division;

6.4.1 INAC Gallery;

6.4.2 Plastic Arts Department;

6.4.3 Literature Department;

6.4.4 Theatre and Dance Department;

6.4.5 National Symphony Orchestra;

6.4.6 Polyphonic Choir;

6.4.7 National Ballet;

6.4.8 National Folk Ballet;

6.4.9 Folklore Department;

6.4.10 Culture Centres Department;

6.4.11 Public Spectacles Department;

- Spectacles Board;
- Balboa Theatre;
- National Theatre;
- Travelling Theatre;

6.5 National Division of Publishing and the Media.

6.5.1 La Nación press

- Sales Department

6.5.2 Mariano Arosemena Publishing House

6.5.3 Advertising and Public Relations

6.5.4 Dissemination of Culture.